ACT ONE

VT: SERIES OF SWEEPING SHOTS OF FAMOUS LANDMARKS

We see shots of famous political images -- the Capitol Building, floor of the Senate, a recent Presidential inauguration, the White House, Mount Rushmore, etc.

LESLIE (V.O.)
I love politics. I've always loved politics. "The game."

B-Roll: SLOW PAN OVER some BOOKSHELVES. Nothing but Political biographies.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Some people say that politics is show business for ugly people. I disagree. It's show business for real people -- people whose talents aren't dancing and singing, but rather talking and talking.

INT. LESLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

ANGLE ON: a framed copy of the Constitution...a portrait of Thomas Jefferson...

LESLIE (V.O.)
I just...I love the majesty of the political system. I live for it. I would say that my greatest dream is to be elected President of the United States of America.

REVEAL: LESLIE (AMY POEHLER)

In her office, she is framed by an American flag, and a flag of the state of Indiana. A nameplate on the desk reads "Leslie Knope." She's wearing a beige pantsuit.

LESLIE
My name is Leslie Knope. And I am the Deputy Chairwoman of the Department of Parks and Recreation in the city of Pawnee, Indiana.

Camera widens to see that her office is small and cramped, and not all that impressive.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Can you get wide enough to see the flag?

We widen further to see that there is another desk in her room, with a piece of another guy (TOM) typing at something.

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM

RON SWANSON, 40s, midwestern, leads a meeting of the Parks Department. LESLIE, TOM (Aziz Ansari), and various OTHERS.

RON
Internal Auditing wants to remind all government employees that any gift given by a member of the public valued at over $25 has to be reported immediately.

One employee looks a little worried.

EMPLOYEE
Ron, what about, like, a gift certificate? Would that count?

RON
How much?

EMPLOYEE
Two hundred dollars.

RON
(yes, dummy)
...Yes. That would count. You can't win, just report it and add to the endless red tape.

LESLIE
Of course report it!
(off their looks)
It's the smart play. The last thing we need is the press breathing down our neck. Am I right, Ron? I am agreeing with you.

People stare at her. Ron sighs.

RON
Lastly, tonight is the Community Outreach Public Forum. Leslie's gonna run it.

She grins.

RON (CONT'D)
We need one more. Who wants in?

No one volunteers.

RON (CONT'D)
Tom.

CONTINUED:

TOM
Ugh. Fine.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Every month the city government holds a public forum and every month, out of over 600 city workers, I'm the one they send.
(shrugging)
It's pretty cool. Whatever. No big deal. Just an honor.

RON TALKING HEAD

RON
No one else wants to do it. It's a terrible job, going to some dingy rec center and getting yelled at by the public. I hate the public. The public is stupid.

EXT. EST. EMERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Some people drift towards the door.

CLOSE ON: Sandwich board reading:

Pawnee City PUBLIC FORUM.

7:30 PM, Auditorium

Free and Open to the Public

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Leslie and Tom are in a SCHOOL HALLWAY outside an AUDITORIUM.

LESLIE
(to camera)
This'll be really good for you guys to see. This is where the rubber of government meets the road of actual human beings. When I go through those doors, I have to be on, like the White House Press Secretary. So. Deep breath.
(she takes one)
Let's rock and roll.

Leslie tries the DOOR. It's LOCKED. She jiggles it many times. Locked. Beat. Tom snickers and points at her.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Colorful children's ART hangs on the walls. Leslie and Tom each have an (unnecessary, now that they're in a small room) MICROPHONE, like in a Senate hearing.

About 40 of those little chair-desk combo seats are filled with people, and more stand along the walls -- mostly elderly, all races. Among them is ANN (late 20's, pretty without trying).

Leslie finishes writing her NAME and TITLE on the blackboard.

LESLIE
Thank you all for coming. My name is Parks Department Deputy Chairwoman Leslie Knope.

She casually sits on the edge of one of the tiny desks and TIPS OVER. She recovers, and sits on the teacher's desk.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
With me today is department member Tom Haverford.

Tom notices with irritation people's confused faces.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
Yes, when I was 18 I changed my name from Aziz Abdul Al'Rahman to Tom Haverford. The cold hard fact is that dark-skinned people with funny-sounding Muslim names just don't make it very far in politics.
(jump cut)
Yes, okay, fine, Barack Obama. Why does everyone always bring up Barack Obama? That's <u>one</u> counter-example!

BACK TO SCENE

Leslie holds court.

LESLIE (V.O.)
And yes, I do call myself a "Deputy Chair<u>woman</u>." Politics is changing in this country -- it's not just a boys club anymore. There are 18 million cracks in the glass ceiling, thanks to people like me, and Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and, um... Margaret Thatcher. And Nancy Pelosi. The Parks Department is the site of another one of those cracks.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

LESLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And over the course of my political career, I intend to go around making thousands of more cracks in things, if not outright shattering and destroying them.

She smiles broadly.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Big turnout tonight! Very exciting.

We see the front row is mostly old people and weirdos.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
So fire away! Yes?

Ann raises her hand. A MAN stands aggressively and starts talking.

MAN
I am here because of a crime that is happening right now all over this city, that you people know about and do nothing to stop.

LESLIE
That's horrible.

MAN
Will you commit right now to helping me stop this crime?

LESLIE
Absolutely. We want to serve you in any way we can.

Tom shakes his head in disgust at her naivete.

MAN
Do you want me to tell you what the crime is?

LESLIE
Yes. Please, tell me, so I can help you stop it. I don't understand why you're being so mysterious about this.

MAN
It's abortion.

Leslie winces, glances to camera, embarrassed.

TOM
Abortion's legal, dude.

CONTINUED: (2)

MAN
You promised to stop it.
(holds up mini recorder)
I have it on tape!

LESLIE
Sir, first of all, that was a really mean trap. But more importantly, the city government doesn't have the ability to overturn a Supreme Court decision--

MAN
I think you could, if you weren't so lazy. Mayor Havlicek could.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Mayor Havlicek was mayor when I was a kid. He was quite an old-school character.

B roll: photo of brutal-looking man in a suit.

LESLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He might have been able to overturn a Supreme Court ruling. He died in a small plane accident when he was thrown out in handcuffs at 20,000 feet.

Widen to reveal the picture is on the front page of the Pawnee Journal, with headline: Mayor Meets Grisly End.

BACK TO SCENE

He sits. Leslie gathers herself. Ann still has her hand up.

ANN
Um...I have --

Another MAN stands.

OTHER MAN
When they gonna open up Ramsett Park again? It's been closed for a year.

LESLIE
Yes, we are trying hard to get that park reopened. There was a new problem recently...what was it, Tom?

TOM
Angry dogs.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
Dogs. That's right. There was a pack of scary dogs who were attacking the park workers, and we said, unh unh. Read our lips. "Dogs can't bite people!"

Leslie glances around to see how her tough-talking is received. The old people stare impassively like cows.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
So we are looking into the problem.
(she makes a note)
Who's next?

Ann waves her hand frantically.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Yes, Barry, go ahead.

A 50-ish WEIRDO, BARRY, stands up, very animated and inexplicably super sarcastic.

BARRY
Well, well, well -- today is a great day! Because last month they put me in jail. That's right! And my mother had a restaurant in this town. A creamery. The head of the police is a ninth degree mason.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
There are a few regulars who always show up to our meetings and ramble on about stuff. Leslie says we should listen to them like we'd listen to anyone else. I prefer: mocking them.

BACK TO SCENE

Close on Tom, snickering as he listens to Barry's ramblings.

BARRY
One day there was a fire. And that's what killed my snake. Now I have a few things to say about Laura Linney.

LESLIE
Okay, Barry, thank you.

TOM
No, no, I want to hear what he has to say about Laura Linney.

CONTINUED:

BARRY
Laura Linney is a fifteenth degree mason. In the fifteenth degree they teach you how to talk with your mouth closed.

LESLIE
Okay, thank you, Barry. Thank you for your comments.

Tom starts CLAPPING sarcastically. He whistles.

TOM
I agree with a lot of what he said.

Barry wanders out the door. Leslie spins for camera.

LESLIE
This is valuable. Citizen comments. Who's next?

Ann has her hand up. Another guy starts to get up and talk and Ann just shouts it out.

ANN
Hi. So, I'm Ann Logan, and a few of us are here to talk about the abandoned lot on Sullivan Street.

LESLIE
Alright. Go on.

ANN
I'm a nurse, and frankly I'm not at all interested in politics.

This gets some claps; Leslie looks insulted.

ANN (CONT'D)
But this thing almost killed my boyfriend, so...

EXT. STREET - PAWNEE, INDIANA - MORNING - B-ROLL

This footage is shot on a different day -- the documentary crew has followed Ann, after hearing her issue at the meeting, and is splicing in this footage to illustrate what she talked about.

We're on an unimpressive street full of shops with apartments and small homes behind them.

CONTINUED:

ANN (V.O.)
Anyway, on this lot near my house, a developer dug out a basement for an office building, and then they went bankrupt. And now, there's just...this giant pit.

We look over at a GIANT PIT, maybe 15 feet deep, dug out of the ground. It is surrounded by a construction fence that is rotting and busted down in places -- this has clearly been here for a while. Ann looks to camera and silently points out sections of the pit as we hear the conversation at the meeting continue.

ANN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's been there almost a year.

LESLIE (V.O.)
Twelve months, yes, go on.

ANN (V.O.)
It goes right up to the backyard of the house I rent.

BACK TO MEETING SCENE

ANN
And my boyfriend -- who's a musician actually, who I support, but who was really starting to make some contacts and apply himself in the music business -- anyway, he was cutting through the lot at night, and it was raining, and he just -- whoomp! -- fell right in. Broke both his legs.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Andy is on his couch, both his legs in a cast.

ANDY
It was slippery. Did she tell you it was slippery? Because it was super slippery.

BACK TO SCENE

ANN
There was a little item in the paper.

Ann holds up a clipping from a scrapbook.

CONTINUED:

ANN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
"Unemployed man breaks legs in abandoned pit." Which -- why do they have to say "unemployed" man? That is inappropriate editorializing that doesn't belong in a news piece, in my opinion.

LESLIE
(shaking her head)
It's the gotcha media.

ANN
The point is, there's a giant hole in the ground and people are falling in. I've been trying for months to get someone to fix this problem -- I've written letters, and I've made like a thousand phone calls to the government, but so far...

She makes a zero with her fingers.

TOM
Who fell in again? Your boyfriend?

ANN
Yeah.

TOM
Is he dead?

ANN
No. But he broke his legs.

TOM
Uh huh. How long you guys been together? Is it a strong relationship?

Ann looks at him a little warily.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm not hitting on you. I'm married. I am only asking for background purposes.

MARGARET, a local woman with 4 boys, yells out:

MARGARET
We've been to the Revenue Collection department, and the Transportation Department, and the City Manager, and we keep hitting dead ends.

LESLIE
I'm sorry to hear that, but this doesn't seem like a government problem--

CONTINUED: (2)

ANN
Actually it is, because the government owns the land now. So you're going to have to figure out a different way to blow me off.

LOUD ANGRY APPLAUSE from the crowd. Leslie gathers herself.

LESLIE
Well, guess what? I'm not going to blow you off.

ANN
(unconvinced)
Really.

LESLIE
Yes. I will help you.

ANN
Is that a promise?

LESLIE
More than a promise. A pinky promise. I pinky promise all of you, right now, that I will help. And not only will we fill in that pit, but we will put a beautiful new park on that land.

The crowd is happy. Tom leans over, covering the mic with his hand.

TOM
What the hell are you doing?

Leslie covers her mic.

LESLIE
I'm getting in the game.

ANN TALKING HEAD

B-ROLL: The meeting breaking up, Leslie talking to Ann and giving her a business card and them chatting.

ANN
She claims she's going to help us. Whatever. Frankly she seems like kind of a boob.
(beat)
She wears pantyhose, and for some reason I imagine them going all the way up to her chin.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

B roll: Leslie staring nobly out her office window at the brick wall that serves as her "view."

LESLIE
I've been in the parks department for six years, and until now I've only really been able to engage in park maintenance. For example, last year I led the city-wide drive to disinfect the sandbox sand after those problems with the cats. I heard some testimony from mothers of toddlers that would make you cry. But this pit! The chance to build a new park, from scratch...
(she thinks)
This is my Hoover Dam.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Tom is on the phone.

TOM
That sounds great. Problem is, anything over 25 dollars I have to report. So just call my wife and give her the suits and then if they don't fit her, maybe she'll give them to me.

Tom laughs a snarky little laugh. Leslie walks in.

LESLIE
Hey Tom.

TOM
(covering)
Alright Mr. Mayor. Nice talking with ya.
(turns to Leslie)
Leslie! Hello.

LESLIE
That was the mayor?

TOM
Yeah. We were just rapping about some things.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Tom is so lucky. I need to make the acquaintance of the mayor.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
I swear to God she is the most gullible human being I've ever met in my life.

INT. LESLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Leslie and Tom, brainstorming.

LESLIE
Brainstorm. How do I make this happen?

TOM
Go to the City Council directly, ask them to just front the money.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
Nah, money's tight right now. Parks aren't a priority. I need more firepower. I need some bigger guns.

Tom looks at her chest and snickers.

TOM
Yeah. Your guns are pretty small.

LESLIE
Tell me about it.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Tom and I work great together. We're both outsiders -- me as a woman, him as... whatever he is. I wanna say... Libyan? Plus he's the size of a child. Size twenty-eight waist. Plus he worships the prophet Mahomet.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
Tom Haverford -- c'mon, I'm Episcopalian. Three years now.

INT. LESLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LESLIE
Well, obviously, what I really need is to establish a committee.
(to camera)
Committees are power. They are the lifeblood of the democratic system.
(to Tom)
That was good. Did you get that? For the book?

Tom gets out a pen and paper.

TOM
Yup. Got it.

LESLIE
(to camera)
From time to time, I stumble upon a saying, or a phrase, that really sums up my feelings about things. Tom is helping me collect them, for my memoirs.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
No I'm not.

BACK TO SCENE

CLOSE ON what Tom is writing -- it's just scribbles.

LESLIE
What if we got Mark on board?

TOM
Mark who?

LESLIE
"Mark who?!" Brendanawicz!

TOM
Oh. Sure. Whatever. Call him.

Leslie starts to dial.

LESLIE
(to camera)
You want something done in this town, you need Mark Brendanawicz. He's a city planner and he's "da bomb." Smart, capable, knows where all the bodies are buried. Just a great, solid, smart, big, strapping, solid guy.

Tom looks at her.

TOM
(to camera)
She wants to bone him so bad.

LESLIE
What?
(into phone)
Hey! Mark!

EXT. COURTYARD - LATER

This is an interior courtyard of the building. Crummy, run-down -- just a few benches and a piddling fountain. Leslie approaches Mark, who's eating a sandwich.

MARK
Hey Leslie.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
What's up, Brendanawicz, you crazy ol' Polack?

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Politics is rough-and-tumble. Yes, I'm a woman, but to fit in I sometimes have to talk like a man, act like a man. You have to dish it out and you have to take it.
(she pinches her arm)
Thick skin.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK
"Crazy ol' Polack?" What the hell, Leslie? That's really hurtful.

LESLIE
(crumbling)
Oh my God. Mark, I'm so sorry. I'm just trying to kid around. Oh God. Oh God, I've already screwed it all up.

MARK
Leslie. I'm kidding.

Leslie looks confused, and then laughs really loudly and weirdly to try to recover.

LESLIE
What? Ha ha ha ha! I know. He he he he! Oh man. Good times. Politics.

Mark smiles at her, bemused.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
So. Down to brass tacks. Do you know this pit I'm talking about?

MARK
Yeah. Lot 48. I checked it out like a month ago. It's pretty gross.

LESLIE
As in a gross injustice!

MARK
Okay, but what I meant was, it's disgusting.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)
People have been tossing their garbage into it. And I'm pretty sure there was a dead wolf in one corner.

LESLIE
Let me ask you this -- do you think I could turn it into a park?

MARK
A park. Huh.
(beat)
Well, when I think about the logistics, and the various hoops you'd have to jump through, I'd say: is it likely? No. But is it possible? No. It's not possible. You should give up.

LESLIE
What? Why?

MARK
(annoyed, deep breath)
There's a million reasons why. I used to try to get stuff like this off the ground when I started, but between the developers and the citizen groups, the bureaucrats and the anti-government nuts...it's impossible.

LESLIE
So there's a chance.

MARK
...No. There isn't. Aim smaller, is my advice. Have the wolf removed. You might be able to pull that off before Christmas.

LESLIE
Mark, I need your help on this. I need you to support it.

She stares deeply into his eyes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Can you do me a favor? For old time's sake?

He looks a tiny bit confused.

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
Mark and I...it's complicated. You work closely with someone, two strong personalities, passionate about the same things, sharing a worldview...things can happen. We slept together.

She makes a motion like: there it is.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
A while ago. We didn't really talk about it much afterwards -- we're both professionals, and it doesn't affect our work. I don't know. Some day down the line, maybe we'll give it a chance to become something more. Who knows.

MARK TALKING HEAD

In his office.

MARK
Leslie? No.
(he thinks)
Oh my God -- wait -- yes, we did! Wow, I totally forgot about that. Yes. She's right. Like five years ago. After some kind of...party or something? I was pretty drunk. Anyway. Yeah. How about that.

BACK TO SCENE

She's still staring into his eyes.

MARK
Why do you care about this pit? What's your angle here?

LESLIE
No "angle." I've been here six years, I know more about our city and the government than anyone else, and I've never had my own project. It's not fair! It's like, we're back in school and I've studied really hard and they're not letting me take the test! Imagine how frustrating that would be.

Mark looks to camera.

CONTINUED:

MARK
God if those tests had been called off, I would have been pissed. And those lousy snow days too. I hated those.

LESLIE
I know! Mark, I believe that government can do good things, but you need power, and getting this park made would give me power. The more power I can get, the more good I can do. If I had absolute power, I could do absolute good!

Mark smiles glumly at her sincerity.

MARK
Your enthusiasm is...intense, and off-putting--

LESLIE
Thank you.

MARK
But take it from me -- it's just not going to happen.

LESLIE
But I promised those people I would make this happen. I promised them in the meeting.

MARK
Well, you'll just have to accept that you will be the first bureaucrat in history to make a promise and fail to deliver on it.

He walks off. Leslie looks frustrated and determined until Mark is out of sight.

LESLIE
(suddenly)
Not me!
(to camera)
Why do I always think of the perfect response like one second too late?

INT. ANN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Andy watches TV with his broken legs up. He is swaddled in an old blanket and covered in snack wrappers. Ann is hustling around cleaning up the apartment.

CONTINUED:

ANN
Can you just straighten up your area a little honey? They're going to be here soon.

ANDY
Sure.

He looks around, then picks up a TV GUIDE from the couch and tosses it on the ottoman. Ann sighs.

ANN
(to camera)
That parks lady is coming over, and we're going to see the pit. Probably just a photo op for her, I bet. I still think there's no way the government--

ANDY
Shhh.

ANN
Excuse me?

ANDY
C'mon, honey, if I wanted to watch the news I'd be watching the news.

ANN
I'm talking about the pit <u>you</u> fell in.

ANDY
But it's boring. That's why we have TV, take our minds off boring stuff like that.

ANN
Yeah, boring stuff. Like fixing problems. Dealing. Improving things.

ANDY
Yeah. Either one.

ANDY TALKING HEAD

ANDY
Here's the deal.

He checks behind him to see if Ann is around.

ANDY (CONT'D)
When Ann sees something broken, she feels obliged to fix it. I don't know why, and I don't really care.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

ANDY (CONT'D)
It's the only reason I've eaten a hot meal in the last three years.

BACK TO SCENE

The doorbell rings. Ann answers, and it's Leslie, Tom, and AUBREY (20, bored). Leslie is wearing a YELLOW HARD HAT.

LESLIE
Hello, Ann.

ANN
Hey. Wow.

LESLIE
This is Tom Haverford, my loyal co-worker. And this is Aubrey, our college intern. She's going to document our fact-finding mission.

Ann sees Aubrey's CAMERA and glances knowingly to camera.

ANN
Okay -- let me just get my purse...

Leslie pushes past her and heads to Andy.

LESLIE
This must be our hero. "The man heard round the world." How you doing, son?

ANDY
...Hey.

LESLIE
On behalf of the government of Pawnee, I want to say that we're going to do everything we can to help you. Stay brave.

ANDY
Okay.
(beat)
Can you hand me that TV Guide?

INT. KITCHEN - SIMULTANEOUS

SPY SHOT: Tom and Ann. She's getting her things.

TOM
So, you're a nurse.

ANN
Yeah.

CONTINUED:

TOM
Like, general nurse or some special kind?

ANN
General, but I get people ready for imaging tests a lot, so that's my specialty.

TOM
Do you have to shave a lot of wieners?

ANN
No.

Beat.

TOM
Sometimes when I brush my teeth there's blood.

ANN
(sigh)
Well are you using a soft bristle toothbrush?

TOM
Extra soft. Do I look like an idiot?

ANN
You should go to a doctor. You might have cancer of the tooth enamel.

TOM
Oh god.

Leslie pokes her head in.

LESLIE
Let's go! Fact-finding mission!

EXT. PIT - LATER

The camera ranges over the pit and then finds our gang peering in. They stare at it.

ANN
Right over there is where he fell in.

LESLIE
(hushed; dramatic)
My God. How did we let this happen?

She bends down in a kneel and surveys the scene. Squints. Picks up some soil and rubs it in her fingers.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Soil. Unstable. Crumbly. This whole lot could be vulnerable to mudslides. Aubrey -- get some pictures of this.

AUBREY
Of what?

LESLIE
Everything. This whole thing.

Aubrey takes out her little digital camera and takes random photos of nothing.

ANN
So, you think we can fill it in, plant some grass, maybe a bench or a tree?

LESLIE
Possibly. But dream with me for a second: why shouldn't this neighborhood have a first class park? With a playground, for kids. Do you have kids?

TOM
(looking her up and down)
I'd say no.

ANN
...No.

LESLIE
Okay, but there are a lot of kids in the neighborhood, right? Kids that would love a shiny new playground, with swings and a softball field and a pool, and a jungle gym and tennis courts? And maybe over there: an amphitheater, for Shakespeare-in-the-Park.

ANN
It's not that big a pit.

LESLIE
Well, some of those things. Think about it! A little playground arises from the ashes of a deadly pit. We could name it after your boyfriend. "The Ann's Boyfriend Memorial Park."

ANN
He didn't die.

CONTINUED: (2)

LESLIE
"The Boyfriend Broken Leg Tribute Playground." It'll take a little extra work, but why not try?

Ann shrugs her shoulders and smiles.

ANN
I think that would be great.

LESLIE
Good. Me too.
(beat)
I'm going in.

She steps to the edge of the pit.

ANN
Why?

LESLIE
I need to see it for myself. Don't worry. I've got a hard hat on.

ANN
I see that.

Leslie starts down the side of the pit, slowly.

LESLIE
Aubrey -- document this.
(to camera)
The key to any fact-finding mission is you have to really get into the battle zone. Like a President surveying a hurricane-ravaged town. Or when Richard Nixon went to China, to see...you know, what the Chinese were up to.

She's moving slowly down...

LESLIE (CONT'D)
A politician can't be effective if she doesn't see the problem first-hand. You have to --

Her HEEL CATCHES --

She TUMBLES DOWN --

LESLIE (CONT'D)
(bleeped, obviously)
Fuck! Ow! Shit! God Dammit! Fuck it!

CONTINUED: (3)

ANN
Whoa! Leslie!

They rush forward to help her, but she's gone --

LESLIE (O.C.)
Faaaaaaaaa!

Camera RUNS UP TO THE EDGE and we see LESLIE, covered in dirt, sprawled out on the ground.

ANN
Oh my God. Are you okay?

TOM
Let's ditch her. It'll be hilarious.

Ann stares at him in horror. Then Aubrey SNAPS A PHOTO.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. PIT - MOMENTS LATER

On the edge, Tom and Aubrey look through the digital photos on the little camera.

TOM
Hey, that's a good one. Email me that please.

AUBREY
She's dustier in this one.

TOM
I'll take that one too.

SPY SHOT: At the bottom of the pit, Ann is swabbing Leslie's cuts and shaking up a bag of chemical cold, applying Neosporin, etc.

ANN
Does it hurt a lot?

LESLIE
(in pain)
No.

ANN
Right.

LESLIE
How can you tell?

ANN
I'm a nurse.

LESLIE
Thank goodness I was wearing the hard hat.

ANN
But it fell off.

LESLIE
After my head hit that rod.

ANN
Well, you should be all set now. Hey, you shed blood for the cause. Now we're sisters.

Leslie smiles.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
I've always wanted a sister.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - LATER

Leslie sits on the couch next to Andy peeling off her torn stockings.

ANDY
I can't believe you fell in too. That's hilarious.

ANN
It's not "hilarious," Andy.

ANDY
It's pretty hilarious.

Leslie hands Ann back a hairbrush.

LESLIE
Thanks... Sis.

ANN
No sweat.

Leslie holds out her arms like a toddler, and Ann "helps" her stand up, which she is perfectly capable of doing.

LESLIE
Okay. I am going to show my boss, Ron Swanson, our findings, and demonstrate how dangerous this pit is. He'll have to listen to me, with a broken clavicle.

ANN
Nothing is broken.

LESLIE
Trust me, it's broken. Do you have one of those foam collar neck braces?

ANN
Seriously, you're fine.

Leslie mumbles that she is pretty sure it's broken, but doesn't have the guts to say it out loud.

ANN (CONT'D)
Hey -- this is really cool, that you're helping me with this.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
Yes. Well, I'm a public servant. You're the public. It's my honor and pleasure to serve you.

Ann smiles.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Why don't you come by my office later -- we can talk about the project, maybe grab some Starbucks, maybe gab a little.

ANN
Sure. Why not.

ANN TALKING HEAD

ANN
I don't know. She's a little doofy, but she's sweet.
(shrugs)

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
I may have misunderestimated Ann. She's very dedicated to the cause, like I am. At first, I thought she was just a...well, I hate the word "bitch," it demeans women. I thought she was a bee-yotch. But now -- I wouldn't say she's my <u>best</u> friend, but we're <u>very good</u> friends, and getting better all the time.
(catches herself being nerdy)
And health care is a huge issue. A hot nurse can be a very powerful political symbol.

INT. RON SWANSON'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Leslie and Ron. SPY SHOT.

RON
Explain this again.

Angle on Leslie, who is wearing a travel neck pillow taped shut across her throat with duct tape.

LESLIE
I want a committee, Ron. I want to explore the possibility of putting a park on Lot 48.

CONTINUED:

RON
Aw, that lot is zoned commercial. When the economy turns around, I'll have plenty of developers who would love to exploit that property. You were supposed to put this fire out.

LESLIE
Here's the thing, Ron. When you've been in the pit -- have you been in the pit?

RON
What? No.

LESLIE
Well, I have.

RON
When you fell in?

LESLIE
When I visited the bottom of the pit on a fact-finding mission. And when you're down in the pit... well, you really get perspective about what it all means.

Leslie starts laying out PHOTOS that Aubrey took -- the pit, Leslie posing by it, Leslie falling in...

LESLIE (CONT'D)
I've been a loyal soldier, Ron, but I want my shot. Give me lot 48.
(dramatic whisper)
Let me form a sub-committee, and explore the possibility of building a small park.

Ron stares at her, and realizes she has no real ammo here.

RON
I'll definitely think about it.

LESLIE
I like the sound of that "definitely.".

Leslie triumphantly smiles to camera as she leaves. Behind her, Ron tosses the photos in the trash and resumes whatever he was doing.

RON TALKING HEAD

RON
I don't want this Parks Department to build a park because I don't believe in government.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

RON (CONT'D)
I believe government is a waste of taxpayer money. My dream is to have the public park system privatized and run entirely for profit by corporations. McDonald's I think would be a good fit. Imagine a shiny clean McDonald's in every park. Corporations are so much cooler than government. Government is for nerds and minority women.

Jump Cut -- he is showing us around the office.

RON (CONT'D)
This office is a symbol of how I feel about government:

He points to a MACHINE GUN that's aimed at anyone who sits across from him.

RON SWANSON
This M-16 was given to me as a present by a prominent local gun dealer. I bought two and he threw in a third for free. People who come in to ask me for things have to stare right down the barrel.

It's mounted on his desk, pointing at the guest chair.

RON SWANSON (CONT'D)
What? The barrel's been concreted. I would have to pull out this plug for it to be fully operational.

He gestures to a MINE he keeps on his desk.

RON SWANSON (CONT'D)
This is a partially defused Claymore mine. I want to remind people that asking me for anything is a minefield.

He gestures to a coffee table made out of one of those massive SPIKED METAL TANK OBSTACLES.

RON SWANSON (CONT'D)
That's my crown jewel. It's called a "Czech Hedgehog," and it was used to keep Allied tanks off the beaches in France. It cost me eleven thousand dollars to ship it here. I had to have the floor reinforced. I like it.
(beat)
I think it's beautiful.

INT. LESLIE'S OFFICE - LATER

Mark stands outside in the common area. Ann approaches Aubrey. Mark glances at her. His eyes flicker away, and then immediately back. He stares at her from the side, without her noticing.

ANN
Hey, how's it going? Is Leslie around?

AUBREY
What is this regarding?

ANN
Aubrey, it's me. It's Ann, from the pit.

Aubrey nods blankly. Mark saunters over.

MARK
Lot 48, right? Sullivan Street?
(she nods)
I'm Mark, I'm a city planner.

ANN
Ann Logan. Hi.

MARK
So I want to tell you I have a lot of respect for community activists. You guys get dumped on so much, but you keep at it, organizing the poor, and giving people a voice and really keeping us honest in the government. Really cool work.

ANN
I agree, but I'm not a community activist. I'm a nurse.

MARK
I feel exactly the same way about nurses.

Ann smiles.

ANN
Really? <u>Exactly</u> the same way? How lucky for you that you didn't just make a really embarrassing mistake.

MARK
I know, right? Thank god.

CONTINUED:

ANN
Who else do you completely respect and admire in exactly the same way? Animal trainers? Rental car phone reservation takers?

MARK
Yup. All of them.

She laughs.

MARK (CONT'D)
So why is a nurse "taking on the system?" What's in this for you?

ANN
Oh. Well, between you and me, I own all the nearby lots. I'm thinking if I can get the city to commit to fixing this, I can get it for a low price, bundle it with my lots, and put up a new mall.

MARK
(disappointed)
Wow. Okay.

ANN
I'm kidding. There's a hole in the ground, it's ugly and people are falling into it. That's all.

Mark smiles at her, intrigued.

MARK
I knew Leslie fell in. Tom emailed me a picture this morning. But who else?

ANN
...My boyfriend.

MARK
(not thrown)
He okay?

ANN
Yeah, he's fine. He's great.

MARK
What's he do for a living?

ANN
(wary)
Why do you want to know?

CONTINUED: (2)

MARK
Just making conversation.

ANN
He's a...musician. Potentially. I mean, yeah -- whatever -- he's a musician.

Mark nods slightly. "That guy's not a threat." They hold each other's gaze for a second. Leslie comes around the corner.

LESLIE
There she is!
(re: Mark)
And there he is! There both of them are!

ANN
Hey Leslie!

They hug.

LESLIE
I take it you've met.

ANN
We have. How are you feeling?

LESLIE
I'm feeling...optimistic. Waiting for news from "on high" about whether we get our committee.

ANN
Hey -- no matter what happens, I want to say thanks. I mean it. This is...way better than I thought it would be. You're really fighting for me.

Leslie beams.

LESLIE
Well. That's my job. You want a quick tour?

ANN
Sure...I have to leave in half an hour...

They leave. Mark watches them go.

INT. RON SWANSON'S OFFICE - LATER

Mark walks in. SPY SHOT.

CONTINUED:

RON
Are we meeting about something?

MARK
I want you to give Lot 48 to Leslie and let her try to build a park.

Ron pauses and leans back in his chair. He casually swivels the gun on his desk to keep Mark in the sights. Mark picks up the Claymore mine and idly tosses it in the air. Ron stiffens.

RON
Why?

MARK
Doesn't matter. People like parks.

RON
It's a development lot. Restaurant, office building, something.

MARK
You owe me one. Remember? In fact you owe me several.

RON
You want to cash in for <u>this</u>?

MARK
Yup.

RON
What's your angle?

MARK
Doesn't matter.

Ron stares at him. Mark stares back. Unintimidated.

RON
Trading four years worth of favors for a park that'll never get built. You've gone soft.

Mark smiles and heads out. As he goes.

MARK
And tell her in the next 30 minutes.

He TOSSES RON the mine. Ron stares after him, thinking.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LATER

Leslie and Ann carry Starbucks coffee cups and walk down a VERY LONG HALLWAY that connects the Parks Department with the elevator area. It is lined with columns and arches. They land at the very end, where the elevators are.

LESLIE
There are 85,000 people in Pawnee, and this building contains the entire government. "The Power Center."

ANN
This hallway is endless.

LESLIE
I know. We call it "Archway Alley." Or sometimes just: "The Hall."

ANN
Clever.

PAN slowly over a MURAL PAINTING in the elevator area, of a hard-working, tough as nails prairie woman...

LESLIE
The building is called Pioneer Hall, named by the first inhabitants of this building in 1891.

We see the pioneer woman is holding an ax and must be in the middle of her daily wood chopping.

ANN
(re: mural)
Wow.

LESLE (V.O.)
Yes -- our crown jewel. These murals depict the battle of Conega Creek.

We pan down and see the pioneer woman is actually swinging her ax at the head of a Native American woman.

LESLIE
We put the minimum wage poster over the most horrible parts.

A minimum wage poster is covering up what must be even worse scenes of slaughter.

ANN
That's...horrifying.

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
Yes. Come on -- I'll show you the DMV offices!

ANN
Awesome.

From ALL THE WAY BACK DOWN THE HALL, Tom pops out and calls to them.

TOM
Hey! Leslie! We did it!

They look back at him.

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE -- LATER

Leslie and Ann hugging. Tom tries to get in on hugging Ann, who politely obliges, then wiggles away.

LESLIE (V.O.)
Yes, Ron Swanson has approved our request for a committee!

LESLIE TALKING HEAD

LESLIE
So exciting. This is my first committee, that I'll have headed by myself. Or with someone. First committee, ever, of any kind, for me. But...wow. I mean, in terms of my future? This is huge. I'm barely 34, and I've already landed a Parks Department exploratory sub-committee!
(jazzed)
I'm a rocketship.

BACK TO OFFICE

Leslie, Ann, Tom and others stand around drinking champagne.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
To our beautiful new committee, a committee of dreams! And to America!

Leslie drains a glass like it's apple juice .

TOM
Here let me.

He pours another. She downs it too. Tom marvels.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM
Leslie gets hammered a couple times a month. It's the only way I can tolerate her.

BACK TO SCENE

Mark comes in.

MARK
Hey -- just heard the news. Congratulations.

LESLIE
Thank you. It's very exciting. Do you think I should call a press conference right away? Try to get my picture out there? Or no -- I should wait. Don't want to overplay my hand. Okay. Good. So. Stay! Have a glass of champagne!

Mark glances at Ann.

MARK
Why not.

Leslie goes to get him a glass. Mark motions to Tom.

MARK (CONT'D)
Hey.
(motions to Ann)
What's the story?

TOM
Don't bother. She's ice cold. I already took a run at her and got nowhere.

MARK
Well, maybe you'll do better tonight, with your wife.

TOM
Dude, why you gotta be like that?

Leslie sidles up to Mark, fueled by liquid courage.

LESLIE
Well well well. Looks like you and I are going to be working together.

Tom rolls his eyes and walks off.

CONTINUED:

MARK
Looks like it.

LESLIE
Looks like it indood. Deed. Doo-dee-doo-dee-doo.

She sips and winces at her drunkenness. Ann walks over.

ANN
Cheers!

They all clink glasses. Leslie puts her hand on Ann's shoulder.

LESLIE
Ann, I promise you -- I am going to work my butt off to get this project done. No matter how long it takes. This butt is coming off!

Ann smiles.

MARK
That's our Leslie. She's one tough bird.

He tousles her hair -- Leslie leans into it with a smile. He stops and a second later Leslie opens her eyes. She flashes the thumb's up to Ann.

LESLIE AND ANN - JOINT TALKING HEAD

With a glass of champagne, a little tipsy.

LESLIE
America is a funny place. It's full of opportunities, full of hope, full of small towns and big cities and real people and delicious beverages and hot guys. You just never know, in America, when opportunity is going to strike.
(to Ann)
Are you excited?

ANN
Definitely. I'm fired up.

LESLIE
Yeah!

ANN
I've always heard that democracy, or whatever, only works if people get involved. Well, I'm getting involved!

CONTINUED:

LESLIE
That's right.
(singing)
"Soul sistah, soul sistah, soul sistah!"

She drinks more champagne as Ann gets riled up.

ANN
I'm a nurse, you know? People come into the E.R. with chopped off fingers and compound fractures--

LESLIE
Like me, with my clavicle!

ANN
-- sure -- and if I can handle real blood and guts, I can handle this. I'm making a vow here. No matter what, I'm going to get that pit filled in, even if it takes two months!
(beat; notices something off-camera)
What? What's so funny?

LESLIE
(downs champagne)
Whooooooooooo!

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Leslie, Tom, Ann.

LESLIE
At first the committee will just be the three of us and Mark. We'll have our meetings on Ann's days off. Now -- what to call the committee?

TOM
The Sub-Committee for a Better Tomorrow.

LESLIE
Too vague. That could be about anything.

TOM
The Sub-Committee for Improving Our Nation's...Tomorrows.

LESLIE
Better...

ANN
Why can't it just be, like, "The Committee to Fill In the Pit?"

LESLIE
The name is crucial. It has to inspire confidence in taxpayers. "The Tennessee Valley Authority." Man, don't you just want to give your money to that? Aren't you happy that exists?
(thinks)
How about "The Extraordinary Sub-Committee on Pit Enhancement?"

ANN
That sounds like we're making it bigger.

LESLIE
Pit Fixing? Fixation? Pit Betterment.

TOM
Pit Beautification?

LESLIE
Pit Beautification.
(shaking imaginary hand)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

LESLIE (CONT'D)
"Hi, Leslie Knope, Executive Director of the Departmental Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee for Pit Beautification." Boy, that sounds good.

END OF SHOW